

Echoes of Grace

The Door to HELL



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The Door to HELL

Contrary to popular belief, there is a door to hell.

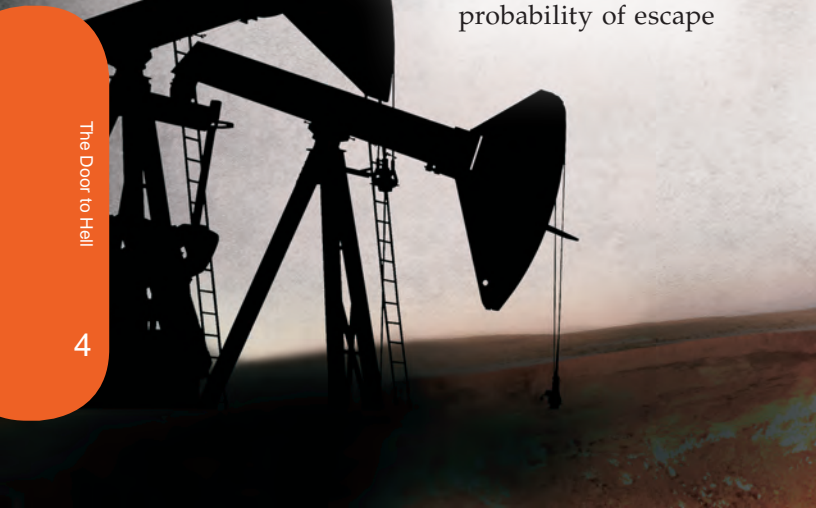
Turkmenistan is a flat, very arid country in Central Asia. In the 1970s an oil rig to drill petroleum was set up not far from the village of Derweze. After a couple of months of drilling, quite unexpectedly a giant sinkhole opened up beneath the oil rig. The oil rig disappeared completely into the earth and all that could be seen was a round shaped divot 50 feet deep, 100 feet wide and 200 feet long.

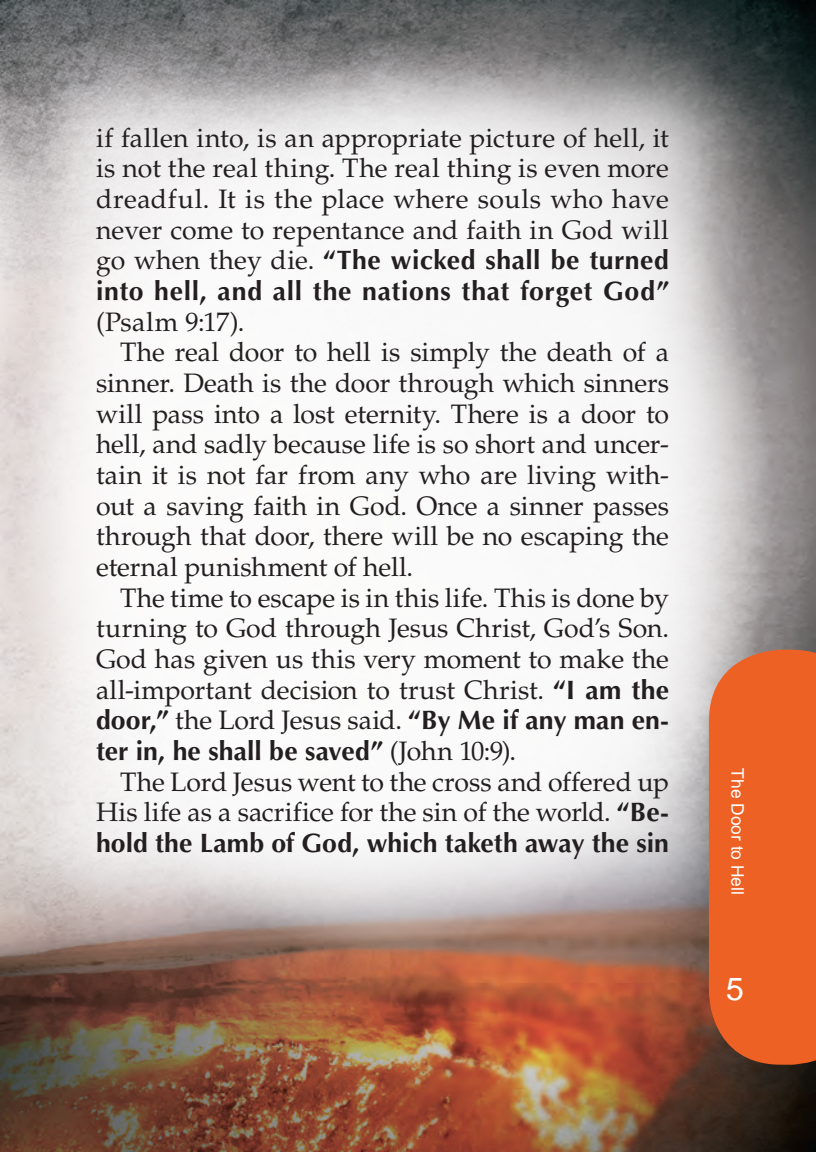
Fortunately, no human life was lost in the incident. However, a large volume of methane gas began escaping from the sinkhole and entering into the atmosphere. Concerned about the health of nearby villagers, engineers figured they could get rid of the natural gas by burning it away. The gas was ignited, and red and orange flames

leaped up towards the sky. The sides of the hole from which the gas was emanating glowed bright red. Forty years later the pit is still burning as fiercely as the day it was ignited. It turned out that what engineers thought was a small pocket of natural gas was an almost limitless supply.

Locals began to call the site “The Door to Hell.” Hardy tourists even began to travel to see it. Some walk up to the edge and look over the side to peer into the glowing pit. That is a foolhardy thing to do because if the ground, which looks none too stable, gave way at the edge and a person fell into the pit, there would be no getting out.

Although that burning site, with its smoke and fire and the zero probability of escape





if fallen into, is an appropriate picture of hell, it is not the real thing. The real thing is even more dreadful. It is the place where souls who have never come to repentance and faith in God will go when they die. **“The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God”** (Psalm 9:17).

The real door to hell is simply the death of a sinner. Death is the door through which sinners will pass into a lost eternity. There is a door to hell, and sadly because life is so short and uncertain it is not far from any who are living without a saving faith in God. Once a sinner passes through that door, there will be no escaping the eternal punishment of hell.

The time to escape is in this life. This is done by turning to God through Jesus Christ, God's Son. God has given us this very moment to make the all-important decision to trust Christ. **“I am the door,”** the Lord Jesus said. **“By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved”** (John 10:9).

The Lord Jesus went to the cross and offered up His life as a sacrifice for the sin of the world. **“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin**

of the world” (John 1:29). Because of what He did at Calvary’s cross, all who now trust Him receive the forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. It is by faith that we pass through Christ the door and find salvation for our souls.

There is a real door to hell, and it is not in Turkmenistan. It is at the terminal, or end, of every person’s life that never comes to love and know God through Jesus Christ. Wouldn’t you rather pass, by faith, through Christ the door into eternal life and joy forever?

There’s another unpopular and unseen reality that you need to know about, and it is presented in *Beware!* ◀



BEWARE!

This is no Lake Michigan! I breathed as I pulled up to my timeshare on the Atlantic Ocean. I'd grown used to the calmness of the lake, but this was alive—wild and churning.

That first night was eerie—35-plus mile-per-hour winds howled under my door as if someone wanted in. Morning wasn't any different. As soon as I opened my eyes, I threw open the sliding glass door to study the ocean, desperately wanting to go in.

But I wasn't stupid. Red flags flew, indicating the ocean was not safe. No lifeguards manned their posts; no humans dotted the ocean. The beach seemed like a ghost town, with meringue-like tufts of ocean foam blowing about like tumbleweed. Signs posted along the beach warned of rip currents, and while there was no mention of it, I knew sharks hunted those waters.

Other than one evening when I spotted a cou-

ple of swimmers and quickly pulled on my suit and joined them in a wonderful salty thrashing, I safely enjoyed the ocean from its edge. I wonder-walked along it each day, biked along its surf, and slept with the sliding glass door open so I could fall asleep to its steady pounding.

Then at SeaWorld that Saturday, I learned something surprising. Only five humans die worldwide each year from sharks. Why was I so cautious then? And ... do I take my real enemy, Satan, as seriously as I took the potential danger of riptides and sharks?

Do you know who your enemy is? Do you have a healthy fear of him as I had of the ocean? Satan is one of your greatest enemies. I realize most people laugh at the idea that he even exists. Maybe they sport a pair of red horns and a tail for Halloween, but they certainly don't take him seriously. I hope you do.

When God created Satan, he was one of God's most beautiful angels. Outwardly, that is. Inwardly, he became far from content to worship and serve and enjoy God; he wanted to *be* God. So he schemed a revolt: **"I will as-**

cend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God. ... I will be like the most High" (Isaiah 14:13–14).

His rebellion against God's authority didn't go exactly as planned. Instead of kicking God off His throne, Satan was kicked out of heaven (Luke 10:18). And when he fell to earth, he brought his rebellion against God with him.

Open any Bible, turn just a few pages, and there he is, inviting the first woman who ever lived to join his rebellion against God. Oh, he didn't put it in those words! He's too crafty for that. He went about the whole ugly ordeal by doing what he does best: deceiving and tempting. Just as he'd experienced a great fall from heaven, he coaxed and pulled off the great "fall" of mankind.

While Satan played a crucial role in man's fall, God played an even more crucial role in man's rescue. In Genesis 3, as God is cursing Satan for his role in this rebellion, He offers this hope-filled hint of what's to come: **"I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall**

bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15).

And that’s just how it happened. Satan bruised Jesus’ heel when Jesus suffered and died on the cross. It looked like a victory for Satan, but not for long. Through His death and resurrection, Jesus crushed Satan’s head.

For now, Satan is busy making the most of his short-lived freedom. As **“the god of this world,”** he’s busy blinding the minds of unbelievers to keep **“the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God”** from shining **“unto them”** (2 Corinthians 4:4).

Pray that if Satan has blinded your eyes and deceived you, God would give you sight and transfer you from Satan’s kingdom of darkness to Jesus’ kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13).

Being warned about Satan and about hell won’t do anyone any good if they don’t act on the warning. *The Best Advice You Will Ever Receive* reminds us of how we ought to respond to faithful warnings. ◀



THE **BEST ADVICE** YOU WILL **EVER RECEIVE**

The year 2013 was an exceptionally bad year for tornadoes in the central United States. In mid May, giant storm systems spawned tornadoes that left paths of destruction wherever they touched down. Images of the large-scale desolation caused by these tornadoes and the human tragedy that followed filled the air waves. It is no wonder that, when a tornado was sighted outside a small town in Indiana, a local radio announcer made an impassioned plea: “A tornado has been sighted. Seek shelter at once! This is the best advice you will ever receive today! I repeat — seek shelter at once!”

The approaching tornado, in this case, disappeared as swiftly as it had formed


and completely missed the town. However, the announcer did his duty and gave them warning.

The Bible warns us about an approaching storm of judgment. Unless souls repent and turn to Christ, the storm of judgment will surely find them. **“Behold, all souls are Mine. ... The soul that sinneth, it shall die”** (Ezekiel 18:4). To die in this verse means that when they pass out of this world, they will be swept into the everlasting destructions of hell. **“Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell”** (Matthew 10:28).

If there ever was a message that needed to be delivered in an impassioned way, it is the message that souls need to forsake their sins and return to God by faith.

Shelter from this impending storm is not to be found in good works, religion or reformation of character. None of these things are strong enough to stand against it.

The shelter is not to be found in a place or a thing, but in a living Person. The Lord Jesus, as the pure, sinless Lamb of God, voluntarily went to the cross and paid the price for our sins. **“Christ died for our sins according to**



the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15:3). The storm that should have broken over us and sunk us to the lowest hell for our misdeeds instead broke over Him. Hear His anguished cry: **“My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me”** (Matthew 27:46).

He paid the ultimate penalty for sin, which is death, but death couldn't keep Him in the ground. Three days after He was buried, He arose from the grave. He is alive now, and He is the living Person that all others must come to, so that they may live through Him.

The best advice a sinner will ever receive is to come to the Lord Jesus by faith that they might live! I hope you take it to heart! ◀

I Love the Bible

**"We have not followed cunningly devised fables"
(2 Peter 1:16).**

*Some tell me that the Bible
Is not God's sacred Word,
And brand as cunning fables
The records of the Lord;
That Moses is a fiction,
And prophets never spake;
And e'en the blessed gospels
As myths I should forsake.*

*There was a time I listened
To these old serpent's lies,
My foolish heart sore tempted
The Bible to despise;
Its holiness rebuked me;
Its precepts crossed my will;
I wished to silence conscience,
And thus my lusts fulfill.*

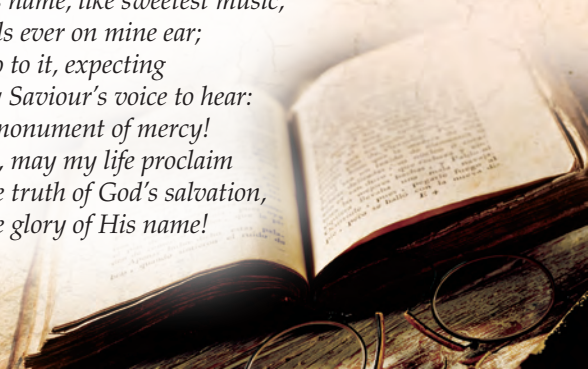
*I cared not for the Saviour;
This present world I loved;
Its lusts and wealth and glory
Alone my passions moved;
I cared not for a heaven;
I hoped there were no hell;*

*I wished for no hereafter;
I loved my sins too well.*

*The serpent's crafty teachings,
The heart's deceptive lies,
The skeptic's subtle reasonings,
All vanished from mine eyes:
Naked and lost and guilty
Beneath God's searching eye—
Eternity before me—
Oh, whither could I fly?*

*I love the blessed Bible;
I know it all is true;
It is a faithful mirror
In which myself I view:
It shows me all my weakness,
My folly and my shame;
But makes thereby more precious
My Saviour's grace and name.*

*His name, like sweetest music,
Falls ever on mine ear;
I go to it, expecting
My Saviour's voice to hear:
A monument of mercy!
Oh, may my life proclaim
The truth of God's salvation,
The glory of His name!*

An open book with aged, yellowed pages lies on a dark, textured surface. A pair of round-rimmed glasses with thin frames rests on the right page. The background is a light, mottled yellow with a subtle, cracked texture.

ECHOES OF GRACE

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*"He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of
God hath not life" (1 John 5:12).*

